United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.14

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

First Committee
14th meeting
Wednesday, 24 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua has the pleasure to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.34, on agenda item 74 (t), entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", on behalf of the following countries: Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

The importance that the Governments of all regions of the world attach to the provisions of the Ottawa Convention is evident once again this year in the fact that the draft resolution has been co-sponsored by the vast majority of the signatories and States parties to the Convention. The implementation of the provisions of this humanitarian instrument gave irreversible momentum to the process of eliminating all existing anti-personnel landmines. Among the Convention's main objectives are preventing new victims and supporting those who have survived a mine explosion.

The First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, which was held in May 1999 in Maputo, Mozambique, began an annual multilateral review process to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Convention and to mobilize the necessary resources for that implementation. That process has been continued with the holding of two other review conferences, namely, the Second Meeting held in Geneva in September 2000 and, more recently,

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-59869 (E)

the Third Meeting held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 18 to 21 September 2001.

An important aspect of the Managua Meeting was the active participation of 96 States parties and numerous non-governmental organizations, despite the situation created a week before by the barbaric terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. Such participation at this critical time for humankind illustrates the willingness among the Governments and peoples of the world to eradicate the scourge of anti-personnel landmines from the face of the earth.

This year's draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is an updated version of resolution 55/33 V, of 20 November 2000, to which we have added a reference in the preambular part.

We have also included a new preambular paragraph recalling the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention, held in Managua from 18 to 21 September 2001, and its Declaration reaffirming the unwavering commitment both to the total eradication of anti-personnel mines and to addressing the insidious and inhumane effects of these weapons.

We have also corrected the number of States that have officially embraced the obligations set out in the Convention, which has now risen to 122.

We have added a new operative paragraph requesting the Secretary-General to undertake, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the preparations necessary to convene the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention in Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2002.

The last operative paragraph ensures that the General Assembly will continue to deal with this issue by deciding to include this item in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session.

The sponsors hope that, as in previous years, the draft resolution will receive the valuable support of the First Committee, and that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as contained in document A/C.1/56/L.7.

My delegation, together with the delegation of Egypt, has for long years taken the initiative to bring this important draft resolution to the attention of the First Committee under the agenda item on this subject. This year, too, we have been joined by many co-sponsors, as in previous years. It is our belief that the thrust of this draft resolution and its substance represent the overwhelming will of the people of the world.

It is our belief that outer space, as the last frontier of humankind, should remain peaceful for all time for the benefit of the human race. The age-old, widely held human perception that celestial bodies and outer space are heavenly objects should act as an inspiration for us in this regard. Therefore, it will be a sad spectacle and a great human folly if outer space becomes the next frontier for an arms race and conflicts. We could ill afford such a development at this juncture in human history.

The precious resources and energy available to us must be directed towards more noble purposes. In particular, when the gap between the rich and poor is ever widening and the majority of the human race is living in absolute poverty, it is irrational and unwise for nations to deploy costly arms in outer space. The world community simply cannot bear the cost, both directly and indirectly, arising out of an arms race in outer space.

Recent acts of terrorism also provide lessons for us. These terrorist acts have amply manifested that a security regime based only on exotic weapons may not be the best solution or measure to achieve human security. Moreover, it is becoming evident that the sense of strategic stability that currently prevails among major Powers could be in grave danger if outer space became an arena for an arms race.

In this context, and as a manifestation of a common desire, the sponsors have once again introduced the draft resolution on this subject for consideration and adoption by the First Committee. The text of the draft resolution, as in previous years, recalls and reaffirms our point of departure: the consensus declaration adopted at the first special session on disarmament. The Committee will recall that at that session all Member States agreed to take further measures with a view to arriving at appropriate negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space. We are of the view that there is an urgent need to move

forward in this direction and to make good on this undertaking now.

We also recognize the mutually complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space. Moreover, we reiterate the importance of greater transparency and better information on the part of the international community on all bilateral and multilateral efforts in this field. In this regard, it is our view that the primary measures for action to prevent an arms race in outer space should be taken at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Therefore, it is our expectation that stalled negotiations on this issue at the Conference will recommence at the earliest, and that the Conference will be advised by the General Assembly to establish next year an ad hoc committee, with an appropriate mandate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

It would have been our wish to strengthen this draft resolution further to facilitate, and call for, more resolute and immediate action to prevent an arms race in outer space. However, we are mindful that the draft resolution on this subject should enjoy universal — or, if not, broad — support for an initiative of this nature to succeed. We are also aware that some countries still prefer a step by step approach in arriving at concrete solutions to prevent an arms race in outer space. Taking all such considerations into account, and in a spirit of compromise, the sponsors of the draft resolution this year have produced a text similar to that of last year, with only technical changes. Therefore, it is our expectation that all member States will be able to support this draft resolution so that a general wish of the international community, as reflected in the draft resolution, is adequately expressed and not constrained or held back.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before reading from the text of the draft resolution, I should note that although I will be reading in Spanish the consultations on the text were carried out in English, and the official version is the English version. Any errors in the Spanish text will be the responsibility of the translator, namely, me.

I have the honour of addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear-weapon reductions. This statement has the full support of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden — countries members of the New Agenda Initiative.

We warmly welcome the landmark outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in particular the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. We remain committed to taking practical steps towards making systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the Treaty, as agreed at that Conference.

Furthermore, agreement was reached at the 2000 NPT Review Conference on the further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives, as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process.

We believe that the progress achieved in strategic nuclear-weapon reductions — whether unilateral or bilateral — within the strategic arms reduction Treaty (START) process, is an important step towards nuclear disarmament. Although we acknowledge that progress has been achieved in non-strategic nuclear-weapon reductions, based on the unilateral declarations of the United States of America of 27 September 1991, of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of 5 October 1991 and of the Russian Federation of 29 January 1992, we remain deeply concerned that many thousands of nuclear weapons are still deployed and stockpiled.

We note in particular that, in the Joint Statement on Parameters on Future Reductions in Nuclear Forces of 21 March 1997, the United States and the Russian Federation stated, in the context of START III negotiations, that their experts would explore, as separate issues, possible measures relating to tactical nuclear systems, including appropriate confidence-building and transparency measures.

We believe it is essential to preserve and to build upon the presidential nuclear initiatives on non-strategic nuclear weapons of 1991 and 1992. In this context, we are convinced that urgent action should be taken to achieve a further reduction in non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process; further confidence-building and transparency measures to reduce the threats posed by non-strategic nuclear weapons; and concrete agreed measures to further reduce the operational status of nuclear-weapon systems.

We urge the United States and the Russian Federation, as countries committed to nuclear disarmament, to proceed with reductions in non-strategic nuclear weapons, in a transparent and irreversible manner, and to include the reduction and ultimate elimination of non-strategic nuclear weapons in overall arms reduction negotiations.

Convinced that, in the present situation, the strengthened dialogue and sense of convergence provide a unique opportunity to move forward, we also invite the international community to lend its support and encouragement to this endeavour.

Mr. Westdal (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I should like, on behalf of Canada and Poland, to formally present to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.32, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

This draft resolution recognizes the vital contribution of the Chemical Weapons Convention in the achievement of our shared objectives of non-proliferation and disarmament.

This important Convention prohibits chemical warfare and all weapons designed for that purpose. It requires the State parties to the Convention to destroy, under rigorous international verification, all of their chemical weapons and to eliminate their production facilities within a prescribed time-frame. It establishes a broad non-proliferation regime that is also under international verification, aimed at ensuring that certain chemicals that could be used as weapons, are used only for legitimate activities, such as in trade or research. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established under the terms of the Convention, plays a central role in its implementation, through processing national declarations, conducting on-site inspections and providing technical assistance to States parties in meeting their obligations.

It is, indeed, very encouraging that, since its entry into force less than five years ago, the Chemical Weapons Convention has made a significant contribution to creating a safer world. It has shown that verification activities are effective; it has led to the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons; and it provides for cooperation and assistance. But much remains to be done. The States parties must be committed to fully implementing the Convention and to meeting their obligations, which will require increased determination and concerted efforts. Our principal shared objective is the achievement of universality. Today, a record 143 States are parties to the Convention — a slight increase since last year. However, it has become more important than ever for us to strongly encourage all States to accede to the Convention.

On behalf of Canada and Poland, I express our wish that this draft resolution may once again be adopted by all without a vote as an expression of the international community's commitment to ban totally these abhorrent weapons. Such a commitment is surely more urgent than ever in the light of recent terrorist activities.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and its associated States, Bolivia and Chile.

For our countries, the objective of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction is to establish balance between disarmament and non-proliferation, on the one hand, and international cooperation for peaceful uses, on the other. This gives the Convention is clearly universal dimensions.

We are very pleased to note the sustained progress made in the implementation of this important instrument of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has already been ratified or acceded to by more than 140 States. However, despite the rapid increase in the number of parties, efforts must be continued to achieve the objective of making the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) universal in scope and character. We also believe that the OPCW's activities must be supported.

There can be no doubt regarding the seriousness of MERCOSUR and its associated States in their commitment to all aspects related to chemical weapons; all those countries have signed and ratified the Convention. Even before the Convention had been concluded, Argentina, Brazil and Chile had signed the 1991 Declaration of Mendoza, which represented a formal commitment to the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons. The subsequent

accession of Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and other Latin American States to that instrument confirmed the pioneering tradition of Latin America in the adoption of measures that contribute to world peace.

In 1998, the Declaration of Ushuaia by MERCOSUR and its associated States established in the region a zone of peace free of weapons of mass destruction. More recently, in the Brasilia Communiqué of September 2000, the 12 South American Presidents agreed to establish a zone of peace in South America. Together with the Chemical Weapons Convention, these instruments complete the structure of peace and security in our region.

Incorporating into our legislation the principles and regulations that underpin the Convention is an additional element that consolidates the firm commitment of the Southern Cone countries to the elimination of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The destruction of all existing chemical stockpiles in the world should be the primary objective of the Convention, since the common objective of the international community is that never, either at the initiative of States or by the actions of individuals or terrorist groups, should chemical weapons be used. MERCOSUR and its associated States hope that by 2007, in keeping with the Convention, all States possessing chemical weapons will have destroyed them.

We urge all States parties to this Convention to work to promote the legitimacy of international control of the sensitive chemical substances covered in the Convention, in order to more effectively implement the multilateral supervision of transfers of such substances. Not to do so would contribute to weakening this model instrument of disarmament and non-proliferation and would endanger all our efforts.

Our countries will continue to offer their contribution to the Convention's success. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have attained an excellent level of cooperation. The meetings between national authorities of Latin America held in Lima in 1999 and Viña del Mar in 2000, and the meeting to be held next year in Brazil, are testimony to this commitment.

The election of Argentina to the chairmanship of the Plenary Committee of the sixth session of the Conference of the States Parties to this Convention last May shows that our credentials in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation qualify us to play a constructive role in this area.

The establishment of the network of legal experts of Latin America and the Caribbean, through which our States are cooperating for the adoption of domestic legislation to enable the effective implementation of this Convention, is another important element of our programme to eradicate weapons of mass destruction.

We reiterate our belief that the Convention and the OPCW are the appropriate instruments to eradicate the threat of chemical weapons from the face of the earth. We wish to express satisfaction with the periodic reports of the Director-General of the OPCW, whose efficient leadership we commend, and to emphasize the recently signed relationship agreement between the OPCW and the United Nations.

MERCOSUR and its associated States fully support the draft resolution that the representative of Canada has just introduced.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I will speak on the subject of outer space. Outer space belongs to all humanity. It is the common aspiration of mankind to utilize outer space for peaceful purposes and to keep it free of weapons and of an arms race.

However, current developments related to outer space are very worrisome. On the one hand, with the advancement of science and technology, there are more and more civilian activities in outer space, resulting in mankind's increasing dependence on outer space.

On the other hand, however, the danger of the weaponization of outer space has become imminent. We have seen that in pursuit of unilateral military supremacy and in disregard of the international community's opposition, there is persistence in developing missile defence systems, and because of long-term plans for the control of space, space weapons are being developed. Furthermore, an outer space war game has been conducted. Therefore, how can we keep outer space weapon-free and avoid an arms race there while maintaining the peaceful utilization of outer space? This is an issue that has direct bearing on world peace and on the future of mankind. Thus, it should be an important and pressing item on the international arms control and disarmament agenda.

For the purposes of the peaceful utilization of, and the prevention of an arms race in, outer space, the international community has concluded international legal instruments, including the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and the Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. However, due to their inherent limitations, these legal instruments are insufficient in preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space in the twenty-first century.

Bearing this in mind, China has long been devoting great efforts aimed at pushing for the negotiation of an international legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the weaponization of outer space. To this end, China submitted a working paper to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in February 2000 entitled "China's Position on and Suggestions for Ways to Address the Issue of Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space". We also tabled a working paper entitled "Possible Elements of a Future International Legal Instrument on the Prevention of the Weaponization of Outer Space" at the Conference on Disarmament last June. These papers explained our basic views on the structure and elements of a future legal instrument.

The Chinese delegation holds the view that, as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the best venue for such negotiations. In its working paper put forward in this year's second session of the Conference on Disarmament, the Russian delegation explicitly stated its position that an ad hoc committee on outer space should be established with a negotiating mandate. The Chinese delegation fully supports this position.

For many years, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution on "Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space" by an overwhelming majority, a fact that reflects the great importance the international community attaches to this issue and its just appeal for the negotiation of the relevant instrument. As in past years, the Chinese delegation has co-sponsored this draft resolution. Here, we call upon all delegations to support this draft resolution, with a view towards commencing the negotiation and preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space.

Mr. Langeland (Norway): The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction represents a unique partnership between mine-affected and other countries, between North and South and between Governments and non-governmental organizations. This partnership and the strong commitment by State Parties are important factors behind the success of the Convention.

To date 122 countries have ratified the Mine Ban Convention. More importantly, there is encouraging progress in the field, such as the reduced use of anti-personnel landmines, a dramatic drop in the production and almost complete halt in the trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines, increased destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, increased funding for humanitarian mine action, including victim assistance and, most importantly, a significant decline in the number of new mine victims.

The Third Meeting of the States parties to the Convention, held in Managua in September 2001, welcomed this encouraging development. The Convention is becoming an international norm that works beyond the membership of the Convention. At the same time, the States parties expressed deep concern that anti-personnel landmines continue to kill and harm countless numbers of innocent people each day. In too many countries new anti-personnel anti-personnel mines are being used. We are still facing a humanitarian emergency.

Norway attaches great importance to the Mine Ban Convention. My country held the presidency of the Second Meeting of the States parties. The main priority for the Norwegian presidency was the consolidation of the Ottawa process and the full implementation of the various provisions under the Convention. We will maintain and honour our commitment to allocate $120 million for mine action over a five-year period.

We are grateful to Nicaragua for hosting the successful Third Meeting of the States parties. We are glad that Nicaragua, a mine-affected country, will now be in the lead to promote the Ottawa process. In recent years this process has been supported by important progress in the functioning of the Convention, such as an intersessional work programme, the establishment of a coordinating committee and the decision in Managua to set up an Implementation Support Unit within the Geneva International Centre for

Humanitarian Demining. We are ready to provide voluntary funding to the new Implementation Support Unit so that it can fulfil its new task.

Norway firmly supports draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.34, and we urge all United Nations members to so. At the same time, my delegation would like to encourage all countries that have not yet adhered to the Convention to do so.

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I take the floor on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.34, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction" as a member of the troika of Nicaragua, Norway and Belgium — that is to say, the present Chairman of the Convention, the former Chairman and the future Chairman, of the Fourth Meeting in Geneva in December 2002. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nicaragua for its perfect organization of the Third Meeting of States parties in Managua in September and to thank all the States parties for their support of my nomination as Chairman of the Fourth Meeting.

Belgium has already taken the floor many times at the Conference on Disarmament, in particular, to encourage universality of the Convention. Since the First Committee met last year, 14 new States have officially acceded to the provisions of the Convention. Chronologically, they are: Romania, Kenya, Zambia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Malta, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Uruguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Eritrea, Chile, Nigeria and Algeria. I would like to congratulate them.

Our draft resolution has already been supported by 106 sponsors, and I would like to thank them. Our objective is to obtain sponsorship by all State parties and signatories to the Convention, members of the United Nations.

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution invites all States that have not signed the Convention to accede to it without delay. In this respect, I would like to highlight the co-sponsorship of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which thereby confirms its declaration made in Managua when it announced its future intention of acceding to the Convention. I have every hope that Turkey will soon accede to it on the same date as Greece will ratify it, as announced in their recent joint political declaration. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has pointed out that every measure has been taken in order to ensure accession in the near future.

Operative paragraph 2 urges all States that have signed but not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay. Cameroon has said that it will soon deposit its instruments of ratification. I have every hope that Ethiopia will ratify the Convention, given the recent accession of Eritrea.

Universality is one of the basic objectives of the Convention, and with this in mind I would like to encourage the 51 States that have not yet signed the Convention to accede to it as soon as possible. However, it is also very important that the Convention be applied effectively and respected as a whole, as stipulated in operative paragraph 3 of our draft resolution.

Mr. Mahmoud (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to present draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.8, on the effects of the use of depleted uranium in armaments. This draft resolution has many justifications. The effects on mankind of depleted uranium in armaments have been of great concern to the United Nations parliaments, humanitarian organizations and humankind in general. The use of these weapons has multiplied over the last 10 years throughout many regions of the world and has led to some very serious consequences.

The presentation of this draft resolution is based on the Final Document (S-10/2) of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, particularly paragraph 77, which calls for effective measures to prevent the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and stresses the need to pursue efforts aiming at the prohibition of such weapons and systems of mass destruction. It is also based on resolution 54/44, on the prohibition of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and on reports of the Human Rights Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Health Organization and the positions of States and parliaments — in particular, the European Parliament. All this has encouraged my country to submit this draft resolution.

The draft resolution makes only two basic requests. First, it asks the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to seek the views of States and relevant organizations on all aspects of the effects of the use of these types of armaments and to submit a

report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Secondly, it asks that this item be included in the provisional agenda of the General Assembly's fifty-seventh session.

The draft resolution is based on our concern that all States of the United Nations assume their responsibilities in accordance with the United Nations Charter to protect humankind from such weapons of mass destruction. We urge all States to support it.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to inform the Committee that the following draft resolutions now have additional sponsors as follows. A/C.1/55/L.7: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; A/C.1./55/L.15: Egypt, New Zealand and Sweden; A/C.1./55/L.24: Eritrea, Guinea, Namibia, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe and Zambia; A/C.1./55/L.26: Zambia; A/C.1./55/L.34: Ghana, Lithuania, Namibia and Zambia; A/C.1/55/L.37: Austria; A/C.1/55/L.39: Eritrea; A/C.1/55/L.45: Guatemala; A/C.1./55/L.47: Austria, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, Cyprus, Eritrea, Estonia, Ghana, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and Zambia; A/C.1./55/L.50: Lao People's Democratic Republic and Uzbekistan.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Hopefully, we will be able to wind up the second phase of our work in the next two days. The Chair is working on a regrouping of the list of speakers for the remaining day so that we can use our time as efficiently as possible. There is a certain lack of balance among the days still ahead, and we would like to make the maximum use of our time, with possibly one day off before phase III starts — not really a day for sitting back and relaxing, but a day for further consultations on when phase III will start.

As I mentioned yesterday, in accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, the Committee will soon proceed to the third phase of its work: action on all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under agenda items 64 to 84. In this connection, I would like to draw attention to the text of the Chairman's clustering paper that is being made available as I speak, contained in document A/C.1/56/CRP.3. In order to utilize the remaining time as efficiently and constructively as possible, I intend to take each cluster successively, one after the other, in the third phase, taking into account the time available and other factors, which I will not go into now.

In this regard, as always, I count on the full cooperation, understanding and assistance of the members of the Committee in order to enable the Committee and the Chair to conclude the Committee's work as early as possible. Again, I will not define what I mean by "as early as possible": it might be ahead of time, before the scheduled end of our meetings. I will elaborate on the procedure for the third phase of our work at the next meeting. It might be useful to remember how actions are usually taken and what the procedural prescriptions are for the third phase of our work.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.